Enter Ambassadors of France.

Now are we well prepar'd to know the pleasure
Of our fair cousin Dauphin; for, we hear,
Your greeting is from him, not from the king.

AMB. May it please your majesty, to give us leave

Waxen, the reading of the folio, when it is used by Shakspeare metaphorically, signifies soft, yielding, taking an impression easily: (so, in Twelfth-Night, "women's *waxen hearts* /" and, in The Rape of Lucrece, "For men have marble, women *waxen* minds," &c.) and consequently might mean also—easily obliterated: but this meaning is quite inconsistent with the context: for in the former part of the passage the event of Henry's being buried without a tomb, and without an *epitaph*, has been already stated, and therefore the want of an epitaph (in its literal acceptation) could not with propriety again be insisted on, in the latter member of the sentence, which relates to a different point: the question in this place being only, whether his deeds should be emblazoned by narration, or his *actions* and his bones together consigned to "dust and damn'd *oblivion*." If any alteration was made by the author, in this passage, he might perhaps have changed the epithet *paper* to *lasting*: and the transcriber who prepared the folio copy for the press, might have been deceived by his ear, and have written *waxen* instead of the latter word. There is not indeed much similarity in the sound of the two words; but mistakes equally gross are found in these plays, which, it is highly probable, happened in this way. Thus, in this very play, the folio has *name* for *mare*. See p. 296, n. 5. Our poet's 55th Sonnet furnishes a strong confirmation of my interpretation of this passage:

> [c] Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
> [e] Of princes, shall out-live this powerful rhyme:
> [e] But you shall shine more bright in these contents
> [6] Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
> [c] When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
> [c] And broils root out the work of masonry,
> * Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire, shall burn
> * The living record of your memory." &c.

So also, in his 81st Sonnet:

" Your *monument* shall be my gentle verse." [1]

MALONE.

Mr. Gifford thinks the expression—a *waxen* epitaph, alludes to a custom still prevalent on the Continent, and anciently in this country, to affix laudatory poems, epitaphs, &c. to the herse, with pins, *wax*, paste, &c. See his edition of Ben Jonson, vol. ix. p. 58.

BOSWELL.